REMARKS

By this amendment claim 10 has been amended. The specification and other claims have been editorially revised. Claim 11 has been added. Claims 1-11 are pending in the present application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original claims and other claims in this and other applications.

The drawings are objected to as being informal. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. Figs. 5 and 10 have been amended as suggested in the Office Action.

Claims 4 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101. The Office Action contends that the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. Claim 4 recites a "parts selection supporting method." Claim 4 does not recite a computer program, contrary to the Office Action. Claim 10 has been amended to overcome the concerns raised in the Office Action. Claim 10 as amended recites a program stored on a computer-readable medium.

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Phillips. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Phillips refers to a system for supporting a process of selecting a required item of datum from among tree-structured data items, as shown in Figs. 5A and 5B (Fig. 5C shows a condensed tree diagram). The selection activity is performed starting with an item in an upper place on the tree diagram down to an end place of the item of "Closer". In particular, "Heading," "Opener," and "Closer" are sequentially selected as shown in Figs. 7A and 7B. Then all the items in the Closer are entered (Fig. 7C). Tree-

structured data spanning from DIVISION to SELECT in Fig. 5A and another tree-structured data spanning from PART to CLOSER in Fig. 5B are stored in the RELATION DATA BASE 29 and CD-ROM 54 (Fig. 3). Please note, however, that these data trees are logically not distinct but belong to one hierarchically structured data tree. Note that PART 212, 214, 216 in Fig. 5A is identical to PART 226 appearing at the top of Fig. 5B. This understanding can be easily derived from the fact that Fig. 5C lists covering from DIVISION to CLOSER.

In contrast to the Phillips system, the present invention specifies two tree-structures of different data groups: one is a set of data on a tree-structure arrayed by the hierarchy in the product configuration (illustrated by reference numeral 101 in Fig. 1); the other is arrayed by the hierarchy in the parts classification by type (103). Though Phillips refers to a plurality of databases, the logical reality is that they are simply one tree-structured database. The present invention, in contrast, uses two types of different tree-structured databases, arrayed in terms of the product configuration and the parts classification.

The tree-structured data in the Phillips system can possess only one datum in a logical sense. Consequently, one number of datum cannot derive two logically different tree-structured hierarchical data as in the present invention, wherein one tree-structured hierarchy is a hierarchical set of data of products configuration that indicates the configuration of the product in which a specific part is included and the other is a hierarchical set of data of parts that indicates their classification such as the date of manufacturing or the type number. The present invention provides data storing means for storing two different tree-structured hierarchical data. Therefore, with the present invention, the computer processing can simultaneously handle both of the hierarchical data for products configuration and the hierarchical data for parts classification.

Further, please note that Phillips indicates a datum listing procedure using a flowchart in Fig. 10. In the procedure, each datum is listed sequentially from the higher level down to the lower level according to the hierarchy to which the datum belongs. The procedure is in certain respects similar to the one shown in the flowchart in Fig. 5 of the present specification, wherein data listing is performed tracing the parentage among data arrayed in a tree-structure. The present invention is different, however, in that a button for execution of the command can be displayed on the screen, which command requires indication of the name of the selected part together with the categories similar to the one to which the selected part belongs. This is another important distinguishing feature of the present invention.

Phillips provides a method of data selection in which data are sequentially selected from an upper position down to a lower position simply within one tree-structure. For example, indicating OPENERs to be selected that compose a certain HEADING, then a lower CLOSER below selected OPENER is selected. The present invention may be utilized in a system in which, when data of the tree-structured product configuration are indicated from the upper level sequentially down to the lower level, the command for indicating data of a part on each level in the parts classification tree, which is a different tree from the product configuration tree, is embedded therein. Thus, the present invention may be used to provide an eased screen switching operation from the screen for displaying the product configuration tree to another screen for displaying the parts classification tree that includes the user-chosen parts.

Claim 1 recites "configuration display data generating means for reading out product configuration data from said product configuration storage means ...; and parts classification display data generation means for reading out information relating

to classification of the parts from said parts classification storage means." Phillips does not disclose these important aspects of the claimed invention. Phillips discloses "a segmented series, ... a logical tree, ... the system displays ... selections already made, ... and [t]he system generally is used to select one information unit or make one decision at a time." Col. 3, lines 6-61. Phillips does not disclose multiple data generation means. Since Phillips does not disclose all the limitations of claim 1, claim 1 and dependent claims 2 and 3 are not anticipated by Phillips.

Claim 4 recites a "step of reading out product configuration data from product configuration storage means" and a "step of reading out classification of parts from parts classification storage means." As reasoned above, Phillips does not disclose such steps. Phillips discloses a single logical data structure. Since Phillips does not disclose all the limitations of claim 4, claim 4 and dependent claims 5 and 6 are not anticipated by Phillips.

Claims 7-10 recite limitations similar to those discussed above. Phillips discloses only one decision step at a time and a single logical tree. Phillips does not disclose multiple data generation means. Consequently, claims 7-10 should be patentably distinguishable over Phillips, and there are other reasons why the claims should be allowable over Phillips.

Allowance of the application is solicited.

Dated: November 29, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By

Mark J. Thronson
Registration No.: 33,082
Rachael Lea Leventhal
Registration No.: 54,266
DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN &
OSHINSKY LLP
2101 L Street NW
Washington, DC 20037-1526
(202) 785-9700
Attorney for Applicant

Attachments

AMENDMENTS TO DRAWINGS

The attached sheet(s) of drawings includes changes to Figures 5 and 10.

Attachments: Replacement sheets

Annotated sheets showing changes

OIPE JC
NOV 29 2004
PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

FIG. 5

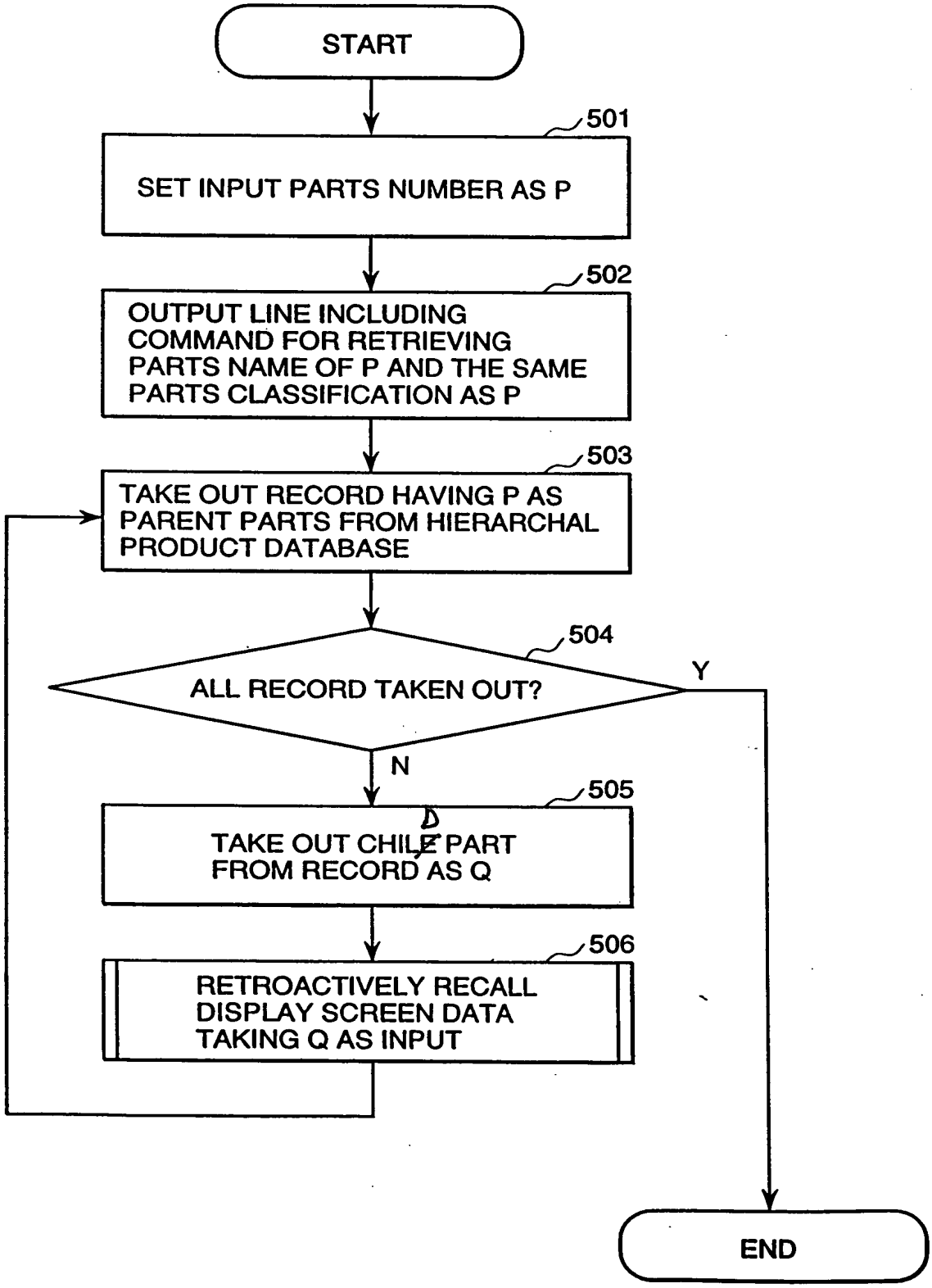
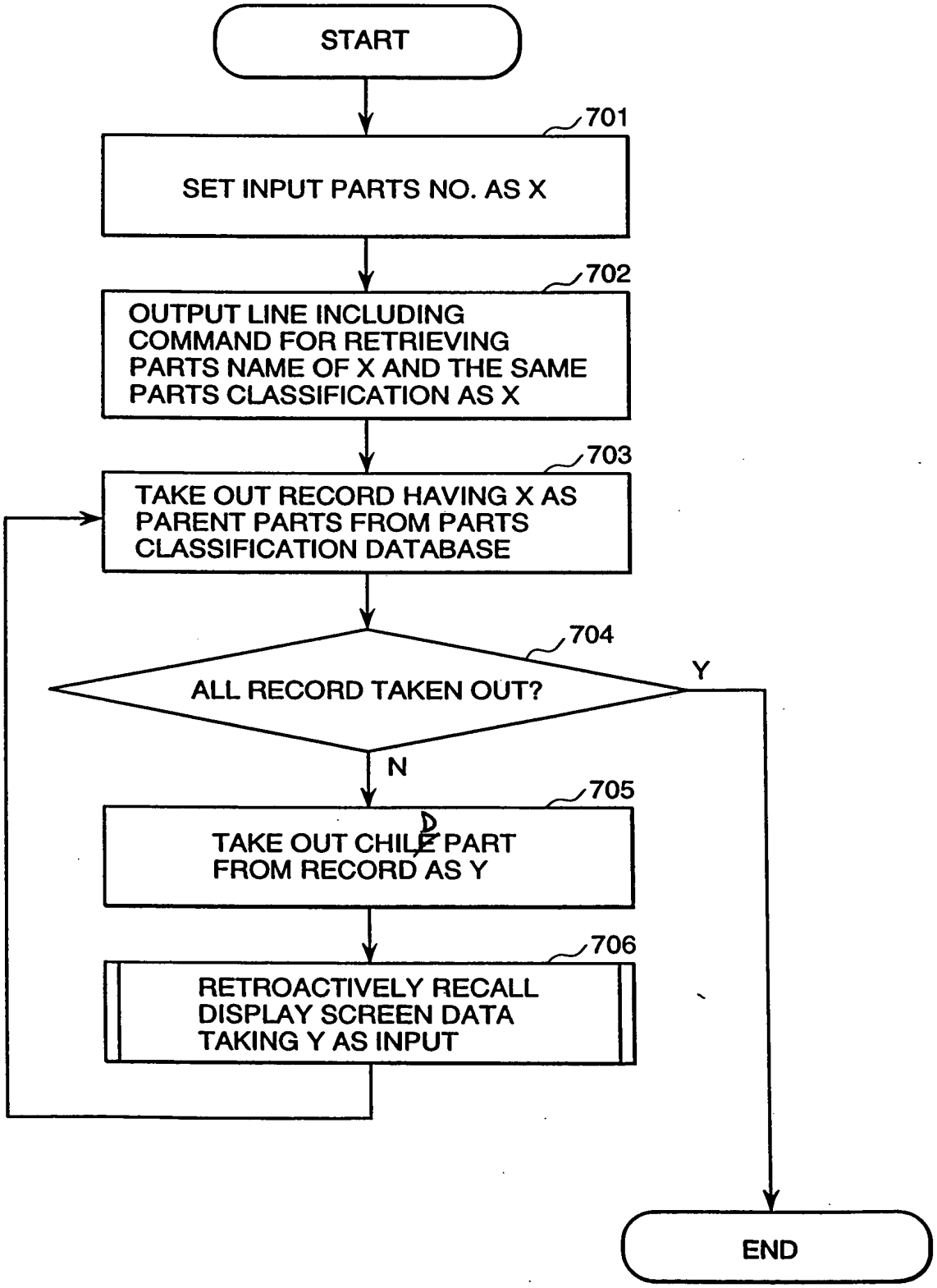


FIG. 10


START
701
SET INPUT PARTS NO. AS X
702
OUTPUT LINE INCLUDING COMMAND FOR RETRIEVING PARTS NAME OF X AND THE SAME PARTS CLASSIFICATION AS X
703
TAKE OUT RECORD HAVING X AS PARENT PARTS FROM PARTS CLASSIFICATION DATABASE
704
ALL RECORD TAKEN OUT?
Y
N
705
TAKE OUT CHILD PART FROM RECORD AS Y
706
RETROACTIVELY RECALL DISPLAY SCREEN DATA TAKING Y AS INPUT
END